Love atones for little Crimes:

AN

ETHIC EPISTLE,

By Way of

APOLOGY

FOR A

DARLING PASSION.

11630. c. 13
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Cum Notis Variorum.

Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret,

HORAT.

LONDON:
Printed for J. TORBUCK, in *Clare-Court*, *Drury-Lane*, and Sold by the Bookſellers and Pamphlet-Shops, in *London* and *Weſtminſter*, 1738. Price Sixpence.

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APOLOGY

FOR A,

DARLING PASSION, &c.

With Explanatory Notes *.

'TIS true, I said in amorous Rhymes,
That "Love atones for little Crimes."
This Truth in Question dare you call?
Then Heav'n have Mercy on us all!

He

* As this Epistle is of the *Ethic* Kind, and a continued Thread of Reasoning from one End to the other, it was thought proper, by the Help of a Commentary, to lead the gentle Reader, as it were by the Hand, thro' the Sense of the Author, which otherwise he might not easily perceive, unless he be a profound Logician, as well as a deep Philosopher.

[Ver. 2. *Love atones for little Crimes.*] This being affirm'd by the Author in a former Piece, a Friend, who saw it in Manuscript, objected seriously against the Morality of the Sentiment, and desired to have a Defence, or at least an Explanation of it. The present Epistle may pass either for the one or the other. If the Objection should still be thought valid, in spite of all that is here said, the Reader is desired to remember, that the Author has only done like the greatest Part of his Brother Writers,

He that condemns our actual Fault,
Extends the Sentence ev'n to *Thought*.
But once to *dream* of lawleſs Joys,
Our Chriſtian Chaſtity deſtroys:
For *he breaks all, who breaks a Part.*——
Now, point me out the guiltleſs Heart.

Your Caſuiſts here dive mighty deep:
They grant, "The Letter none can keep;
"By ſinful Thought is therefore meant,
"Such Thought as grows to fix'd Intent."
But till they make this Matter plain,
The ſimple Reading we'll retain.
Who leaves the Letter, leaves his Guide:
For Comments ſet the Text aſide.

But

Writers, who, when they are once accuſed of an Error, generally perſiſt againſt Conviction, and fall into many more to defend that one.

Ver 4—10. The univerſal Guilt of Mankind, in Thought at leaſt, a Proof of the Propoſition above.

Ver. 11—18. The Texts which condemn ſinful Thoughts to be underſtood literally.

But in Suſpenſe why ſhould we ſtay?
Does not the Word expreſsly ſay,
" That in the Heart Adult'ries riſe,
" From looking with laſcivious Eyes?"
Who looks, and luſts, incurs the Curſe.——
And Human-kind is ſo perverſe,
That by the Eyes if Guilt comes in,
The Wretch that ſees is ſure to ſin.

Great was poor ORIGEN's Miſtake,
(That Eunuch for the Goſpel's Sake:)
He cut off all the *active Part*;
But left the *Windows* of his Heart.

Ver. 20—26. A particular Proof, in the Caſe of looking and luſting after Women.

Ver. 27—38. Origen's *Miſtake.*] This Father was a Catechiſt of young Men and Women, who offered themſelves for Baptiſm upon their Converſion to Chriſtianity. To prevent any ill Suſpicions that might ariſe from his great Familiarity with the fair Sex, as well as to cruſh all carnal Concupiſcence in his own Body, he deprived himſelf of Virility: Which Fact he afterwards grievouſly lamented, when he found it was not effectual to keep him from evil Thoughts.

The Counſel was, had he been wiſe,
To loſe no Members but his *Eyes*:
For in the *Middle* tho' they center'd,
'Twas *there* his Fornications enter'd:
There lay the Cauſe of his Complaint:
And 'twould have vex'd the greateſt Saint,
That Guilt on Guilt he liv'd to heap,
For *looking* where he could not *leap*.

You ſee, my Friend, how Matters ſtand:
I take no Force from the Command.
You never *acted* aught of Shame.——
But you have *thought*,—— and that's the ſame.
The Caſe is plain; the Words expreſs:
Then where's the Source of your Redreſs?

'Tis

Ver. 40. *The Command.*] *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*, as it is extended by Divines to the ſeveral Degrees of carnal Affection, as well as Action.

'Tis in the *Paſſion* that prevails:
'Tis in the *wicked Limb* that fails.
Paſſions, in Woman, or in Man,
Will take their Turn, ſtrive all we can:
And all the carnal Members know,
What they were deſtin'd to go through.
Theſe tend by Nature to their Gole,
As the touch'd Needle to the Pole:
And ſhall we damn a human Creature,
For *being* —— what he *is* by Nature?

The Scripture's Senſe and mine agree;
"From little Crimes no Mortal's free."
Yet *ev'ry Mortal* is not curſt,
Becauſe *all Sin* was damn'd at firſt.

Heav'n

Ver. 45—54. A general Confirmation of the firſt Propoſition, That *Love atones for little Crimes*, taken from the irreſiſtible Force of our Paſſions.

Ver. 55—64. The ſame Thought purſued, and particularly applied.

Heav'n weighs the Motives and the Caſe,
And meets our Weakneſs with his Grace.
Hence *Love*, the Weakneſs of us all,
Atones, ev'n while it *makes us fall.*
Such Slips are owing to our Make;
And *Grace* comes in for *Nature*'s Sake.

'Tis thus, or none could Mercy hope,
From humble Curate up to Pope.
(And if the Clergy may deſpair,
What Wretches we poor Laymen are!)
That choſen Veſſel, righteous PAUL,
Whoſe Caſe were happy for us all,
Complains aloud of *Wars within*,
And Members *prompting* him to Sin.

PAUL

Ver. 65—68. Confirmation from the Improbability of Pardon to any Perſon without ſome ſuch Suppoſition.
Ver. 69—100. Inſtances of the Prevalence of Nature in the beſt of Men.
Ver. 71, 72. See ſeveral Parts of his Epiſtles.

PAUL ſpoke this Sentence with Concern,
" To wed, is better than to burn."
Good Man! his Work was almoſt done:
'Twas worſe with TIMOTHY his Son.

JOSEPH, I grant you, once was cool.——
That's an Exception, not a Rule.
Before this Youth, who ſcorn'd his Dame,
The Prieſt of ON's fair Daughter came;
And were her blooming Charms withſtood?
No: That was more than JOSEPH could——
For he was JACOB's *ableſt* Son:
He got *two* Tribes —— inſtead of *one*.

Ver. 76. Timothy *his Son.*] St. *Paul* calls *Timothy* his Son in the Beginning of his firſt Epiſtle to him.

Ver. 77. See the Hiſtory of *Joſeph.*

Ver. 80. *The Prieſt of* On's *fair Daughter.*] *Joſeph* was married to this Lady: But this makes him never the worſe an Inſtance for our Purpoſe, which is only to prove that *Nature will prevail*, and therefore that ſome Allowances for our Weakneſs are always to be underſtood.

Ver. 84. *Manaſſeh* and *Ephraim.* One of whom was ſubſtituted in the Room of his Uncle *Levi*, whoſe Tribe was devoted to the Prieſthood.

Suppoſe we more Examples bring,
And turn to ISRAEL's wiſeſt King?
That SOLEMN PREACHER *taſted* firſt
The *Bliſs* which afterwards he *curſt*:
Nay, ev'n *in Age* renew'd his Flame,
And *dy'd*, for aught we know, *the ſame*.
He rails on Women of the Street;
But makes them ſay, *Stol'n Joys are ſweet*.

King DAVID liv'd a Man of God:
Yet half his Deeds were vaſtly odd.
He mourn'd URIAH's raviſh'd Wife;
But with a *Miſtreſs* ended Life.

The

Ver. 87, 88. *Taſted firſt The Bliſs.*] He is ſaid to have had ſeven hundred Wives, and three hundred Concubines; by which Account he ſeems to have taſted this Bliſs pretty largely. *And it came to paſs when* Solomon *was old, that his Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods.*

Ver. 88. *Which afterwards he curſt.*] In his Book of *Eccleſiaſtes.*

Ver. 94. See his whole Hiſtory.

Ver. 96, 97, 98. *Abiſhag.* See the Account of *David.* *This*

The Monarch's Pulſe, indeed, was low,
Nor could his Blood be taught to flow:
But 'tis *no Virtue* of the Man,
Where Nature does the moſt ſhe *can*.

Why ſhould we run the Bible thro'?
'Midſt many Inſtances, theſe few
Inform us, NATURE will take Place,
In ſpite of *Wiſdom*, or of *Grace*.
And ſhall we no Expedient find
To ſalve the Fault of all our Kind?
A *Weakneſs* that belongs to each,
(Obſerve the Sum of what I preach!)
In *venial Colours* muſt be painted,
Or, all the Saints will be *unſainted*.

Take

Damſel was very fair, and cheriſhed the King, and miniſtred unto him; but the King knew her not. For King David *was old, and ſtricken in Years,—and he could get no Heat.*

Ver. 102—110. The general Propoſition reſum'd, and the Neceſſity of believing it aſſerted, to ſupport the Character of Sanctity which many have had.

Take the dark Side of what I ſay,
And not one Chriſtian gets away.
The *preſent* Thought condemns the *paſt*,
And by *himſelf* ſhall each be caſt:
For ſure his Conſcience muſt be wrong'd,
Who ſays, he *never* look'd and long'd.
Now where the Guilty are to go,
Our *Sunday* Guides may let us know.
Tremble each Woman, and each Man!
Ye Prieſts! abſolve them, if you can.

But ſay that Nature, as ſhe ought,
Atones our *neceſſary* Fault:
(And ſure, in vain we faſt and pray;
For when ſhe prompts, we muſt obey:)
Then

Ver. 111—128. The Argument viewed in two oppoſite Lights, in order to ſtrengthen the Concluſion drawn above.

Then all the Matter's at an End,
The *Cauſe* and *Cure* ſo juſtly blend.
See, join'd the *Pardon* and the *Crime*,
And Truth, for once, convey'd in Rhyme!

Here PAUL, who ſtood our Friend before,
Stands forth, to offer ſomething more.
He *recommends* the ſingle State,
But does it at ſo *faint* a Rate,
That any married Man alive,
(For PAUL had not the Heart to wive,)
Who can the Odds from Trial tell,
Might argue *twenty Times* as well:
Yet when did Reaſon once prevail
Againſt th' Attraction of the *Tail*?

Ver. 129, to the End.] What St. *Paul* ſays in favour of a ſingle Life, and againſt Polygamy in Biſhops, no valid Objection againſt the Propoſition maintained in this Epiſtle.

The ſame Apoſtle wiſely thought,
Two Wives well us'd, a Church well taught,
Would burden much a Biſhop's Life;
And therefore counſel'd—— but *one* Wife.
From this what Sequel can enſue?
Only, that ſome had taken *two*:
At leaſt, that ſome were *that Way* leaning:
For elſe the Caution had no Meaning.

This Counſel thoſe may take who liſt,
And read it, like a *Romiſh* Prieſt,
The ſtricteſt Way it can be read;
That Prieſts ſhould neither *wench* nor *wed*.

Ver. 144, 145, 146. We have no Reaſon to think but the primitive Chriſtians follow'd the Cuſtoms of their ſeveral Countries, in ſuch Matters as were undetermined.

Our *Ghoſtly Fathers*, if they pleaſe,
(The Precept reaches only theſe,)
May follow cloſe St. PAUL's Advice:
But *Laymen* ſcarce will be ſo nice.

FINIS.

Our Ghostly Fathers, if they please,
(The Precept reaches only these,)
May follow close St. PAUL's Advice:
But Laymen Dance will be so nice.

FINIS.